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### Poll: Montanans call for compromise to settle wilderness issue quickly

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# The University of Montana

## NEWS RELEASE

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Missoula, MT 59812  
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Jan. 7, 1992

### POLL: MONTANANS CALL FOR COMPROMISE TO SETTLE WILDERNESS ISSUE QUICKLY

#### MISSOULA --

Most Montanans want the wilderness issue settled now, not later, and think all interested parties should compromise further to achieve that goal, according to the latest Montana Poll conducted by The University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

Susan Selig Wallwork, director of survey research for the bureau, says the poll revealed that, by a two-to-one margin, Montanans apparently want an end to discussion and argument over the wilderness issue. About 66 percent of the respondents said now is the time to decide the matter, while 29 percent preferred a later settlement. Five percent were undecided.

The statewide poll, conducted Dec. 12-17, asked 401 adults about the continuing wilderness deliberations for the U.S. Forest Service roadless lands in Montana. It did not ask which designation they preferred for these lands.

In order to reach a timely settlement, Wallwork says, Montanans endorse further compromise by a margin of four to one. This comes despite claims by some interest groups that they've already made significant compromises and that further compromise would result in a loss of what they're most concerned about.

Sixty-seven percent of the Montanans polled said all interest

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groups should compromise further, and 4 percent volunteered that compromise was warranted from some of the groups. Only 16 percent said there has been enough compromise already.

The poll also found that these sentiments prevailed among all respondent groups regardless of age, education, income, or political preference, Wallwork says. "As a subgroup, men were noticeably more definite than women about settling the issue now (75 percent vs. 55 percent)," she says. "But in all other cases, no fewer than six in ten wanted the issue settled now and felt that everybody should compromise further to attain that goal."

The Montana Poll, begun in 1981, is an ongoing telephone survey of statewide public opinion. The December 1991 poll results have a maximum error margin of plus or minus 5 percent.

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